







Katherine J. Butler, General Editor





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Bathed in Love: Inspirations to Shower You with Joy and Soak You in Hope

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INTRODUCTION

A TEACHER OF RELIGIOUS LAW once asked Jesus a question that perhaps all of us have wondered at one time or another: What is the greatest commandment? In other words, if there is one thing we need to get right, what would it be? Jesus answered with this: "You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. . . . [And] love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:30-31).

Jesus wants his followers to have a life bathed in love: love for God, love for their neighbors, and love for themselves. This command is not an easy ask and may even seem impossible. Many of us feel there is little space in our souls to love well as we race through life trying to meet one demand after another.

If this is true for you, then this little book is a great place to begin. Inside are one hundred passages from Scripture that have been carefully selected to encourage and inspire your faith. Following the verses are short devotions to bathe you in love. You'll also find self-care



practices sprinkled throughout the book to help you feel refreshed, relaxed, and reconnected to God.

Before you open this book each time, remember that these devotions aren't meant to become one more item on your to-do list. Our hope and prayer is that each reading will help you sink deeper into God's great promises of love and care for you.

Set aside time to deepen your love for God, for your neighbor, and for yourself. For Jesus has said no other commandment is greater than this.

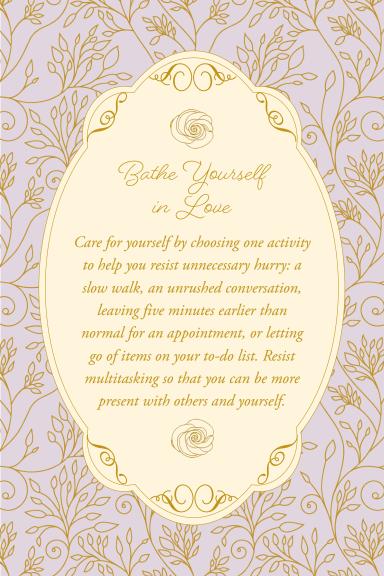


AN OCEAN OF LOVE

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. . . . When you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people.

EPHESIANS 1:2, 13-14

God's love is like a vast ocean. He sends wave after wave of blessings to flow over you. Just as the movement of the ocean is constant, God's blessings are constant, even when you are not aware of them. Scripture is filled with descriptions of the gifts God promises to those who love him, including his presence, his grace, and his peace. He also sends you his Holy Spirit, who opens your eyes to the blessings that surround you every day.





This is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

JOHN 3:16

The greatest gift God offers you is his Son, Jesus. Through Jesus, God gives you not only eternal life but also blessings for today: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). What makes these gifts so wonderful is that you don't have to work for them or earn them. You simply believe that God has given you his Son and eternal life with him. Then you yield yourself to him and accept these blessings, which no one can take away. Have you received God's wonderful gifts?





Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

ROMANS 12:2

Letting God change your thinking will help you live according to his priorities, and the freedom it brings is transforming. Jesus modeled a balance between socializing and solitude, action and reflection, mission and meditation, hard work and rest. This pace allowed him to be guided by God's will instead of human pressures. As you learn the art of a balanced life, you'll realize that God is not calling you to meet every need and volunteer at every opportunity. What a relief! Let the transformation begin.





WASHING AWAY YOUR SINS

If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved.

ROMANS 10:9-10

This world—this life—is fraught with sadness and tragedy. All of us, unfortunately, contribute to this reality and are victimized by it at the same time. The Bible makes it clear that God longs to rescue the people he made and loves. When you believe in your heart that Jesus died to pay the penalty for your sins and that God resurrected him, and when you confess your sins to him and proclaim your faith to others, you secure your salvation and your place in eternity with God and his people. Have you responded to his call yet? He's waiting for you with open arms.



CONNECT WITH CONVERSATION

The LORD is close to all who call on him, yes, to all who call on him in truth.

PSALM 145:18

Prayer is an intimate conversation with your heavenly Father. Through prayer he makes his love and resources available to you. Just as you enjoy being with the people you love, you'll learn to enjoy spending time with God the more you get to know him and understand how much he loves you. Good conversation includes listening as well as talking, so be sure to allow time to hear God speak to you. When you listen, he will make his wisdom and his will known to you.



WORTH FOLLOWING

Commit everything you do to the LORD. Trust him, and he will help you.

PSALM 37:5

Reing committed to God means that you trust him to lead you and do what is best for you. It means resolving to do your best to obey all of God's Word in all areas of your life. When you commit to following God, he commits to leading you. Take comfort and shelter in the Lord Almighty—a leader you can trust.



AN UNCHANGING PROMISE

Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.

JAMES 1:17

God's character never changes, so he is completely reliable. What great comfort! No matter how your life changes, no matter what new situation you face, God is with you. You can always count on his unchanging promise to take good care of you.